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WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM,
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Preparatory Committee
First session
Geneva, 1-5 May 2000

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Prepared by the Secretary-General

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Item 1. Opening of the session

1. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 1 to 5 May 2000. The session will be opened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the World Conference, who will preside over the meeting until the election of the Chairperson.

Item 2. Election of officers

2. The Commission on Human Rights decided, in paragraph 47 (a) of its resolution 1999/78, that the bureau of "the Preparatory Committee scheduled in 2000 and 2001 will be headed by the same bureau composed of 10 members, i.e. two representatives per regional group, in order to ensure continuity and the adequate representation of all Member States of the United Nations".

Item 3. Adoption of the agenda and rules of procedure

3. The General Assembly, in paragraph 29 (d) of its resolution 52/111, decided that "the Commission on Human Rights will act as the preparatory committee for the World Conference and that its deliberations should be open-ended, allowing for the full participation of all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with established practice". The Preparatory Committee may wish to use as the rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee, to the extent possible, the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, taking into account decisions of the Commission on Human Rights on organizational matters, notably the decision referred to in paragraph 2 above.

4. Rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council provides that "[the Preparatory Committee] shall at the beginning of each session, after the election of its officers ... adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda". The provisional agenda (A/CONF.189/PC.1/1) has been drawn up by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference, in conformity with paragraph 32 (d) of General Assembly resolution 54/154 which requests the High Commissioner to "draw up a draft agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee, taking into consideration, inter alia, the need to address in a comprehensive manner all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related contemporary forms of intolerance".

Item 4. Organization of work

5. The attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to General Assembly resolutions 52/111, 53/132 and 54/154 and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1998/26 and 1999/78 concerning preparations for the World Conference.

6. In view of the limited time available to the Preparatory Committee at its first session, the Committee may wish to adopt decisions concerning the organization of its work, including on the frequency and duration of statements, the opening and closure of the list of speakers, and the

submission of draft decisions. Furthermore, the attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to the relevant resolutions concerning control and limitation of documentation (inter alia, General Assembly resolution 33/56 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1981/83 and 1982/50).

Item 5. Provisional agenda, draft rules of procedure, dates, duration, venue of and participation at the World Conference

7. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General addressing these issues (A/CONF.189/PC.1/2). The attention of the Preparatory Committee is also drawn to the report of the sessional open-ended working group to review and formulate proposals for the World Conference (E/CN.4/1999/16) which met during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

Item 6. Preparatory meetings and activities at the international, regional and national levels

8. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1999/78, requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize an international seminar of experts on the remedies available to victims of acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and on good national practices in this field. The Preparatory Committee will have before it the report of an expert seminar on this subject, held in Geneva from 16 to 18 February 2000 (A/CONF.189/PC.1/8).

9. In resolution 1999/78, the Commission also requested the High Commissioner to encourage other activities, particularly seminars, which could form part of the preparations for the World Conference. In resolution 1998/26, the Commission recommended that the activities of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination be focused towards the preparatory process for the World Conference. In this regard, an expert seminar on racism, refugees and multi-ethnic States was held in Geneva from 6 to 8 December 1999 in the context of the Programme of Action, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 49/146. The Preparatory Committee will have before it the report of this seminar (A/CONF.189/PC.1/9).

10. In its resolution 54/154, the Assembly requested the High Commissioner to undertake initiatives to prepare for the World Conference. In the same resolution, the Assembly requested non-governmental organizations to undertake reviews and submit recommendations to the Preparatory Committee. The Committee will have before it the report of a satellite meeting, referred to as the Bellagio Consultation, held in Bellagio, Italy from 24 to 28 January 2000, in which the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights participated (A/CONF.189/PC.1/10).

11. The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, in its resolution 1999/23, requested that the report of the Montreal international seminar on inter-cultural and multi-cultural education be made available to the Preparatory Committee. The Preparatory Committee will therefore have before it the report of this seminar (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2000/WP.4).

Item 7. Reports, studies and other documentation for the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference

Review of progress made in the fight against racism and obstacles to further progress

12. In resolution 1999/78, the Commission requested the High Commissioner to prepare a questionnaire to elicit information on progress made in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, particularly since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and on obstacles to further progress in the field and ways to overcome them, from States, specialized agencies, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and national institutions. In the same resolution, the Commission also requested the High Commissioner to review progress made in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to reappraise obstacles to further progress in the field and ways to overcome them with a view to submitting her conclusions to the Preparatory Committee. In response to these two related requests, the Preparatory Committee will have before it a report of the High Commissioner (A/CONF.189/PC.1/3).

Improving coordination between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and all specialized agencies and international, regional and subregional organizations

13. In resolution 1999/78, the Commission requested the High Commissioner to undertake a study, to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its first session on ways of improving coordination between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and all specialized agencies and international, regional and subregional organizations in the field of action to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the secretariat on this subject (A/CONF.189/PC.1/4).

14. In its resolution 54/154, the General Assembly requested, inter alia, specialized agencies, other international organizations, concerned United Nations bodies and regional organizations to undertake reviews and submit recommendations to the Preparatory Committee through the Secretary-General. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting contributions by these organizations (A/CONF.189/PC.1/17).

Research and consultations on the use of the Internet

15. In its resolution 1999/78, the Commission requested the High Commissioner to undertake research and consultations on the use of the Internet for purposes of incitement to racial hatred, racist propaganda and xenophobia, to study ways of promoting international cooperation in this area, and to draw up a programme of human rights education and exchanges over the Internet on experience in the struggle against racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights undertook a process of consultations in accordance with this request. The Preparatory Committee will have before it the report of the High Commissioner on those consultations (A/CONF.189/PC.1/5). The attention of the Preparatory

Committee is drawn to the report of the Secretary-General submitted, pursuant to Commission resolution 1999/78, to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session which gives additional information on research and activities undertaken to date regarding the Internet (E/CN.4/2000/15).

The effects of racial discrimination on children of minorities and migrants

16. In its resolutions 52/111 and 53/132, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue the study on the effects of racial discrimination on the children of minorities and those of migrant workers in the fields of education, training and employment. The Commission, in its resolution 1998/26, recommended that the activities of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade be focussed towards the preparatory process for the World Conference and the Programme of Action includes a request that action be taken on the subject of racial equality and its effects on the children of migrant workers. In response to these requests, the Preparatory Committee will have before it a report of the Secretary-General on the effects of racial discrimination on the children of minorities and those of migrant workers (A/CONF.189/PC.1/11).

Reports by special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights

17. In resolution 1999/78, the Commission requested the High Commissioner to help the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Glèlè-Ahanhanzo (Benin), to carry out a study on preventive measures relating to ethnic, racial, religious and xenophobically motivated conflicts and to formulate recommendations for consideration by the Preparatory Committee at its first session. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the preliminary study by the Special Rapporteur (A/CONF.189/PC.1/6).

18. Also in resolution 1999/78, the Commission requested the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor (Tunisia), to prepare studies on action to combat incitement to hatred and religious intolerance. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the study by the Special Rapporteur (A/CONF.189/PC.1/7).

19. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/154, requested, inter alia, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Ms. Gabriela Rodríguez Pizarro (Costa Rica), to undertake reviews and submit recommendations concerning the World Conference and its preparations to the Preparatory Committee, through the Secretary-General. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the contribution of the Special Rapporteur (A/CONF.189/PC.1/19).

Contributions of human rights treaty bodies

20. In resolution 54/154, the General Assembly requested, inter alia, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to undertake reviews and submit recommendations concerning the World Conference and the preparations therefor to the Preparatory Committee

though the Secretary-General. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the contribution of the Committee (A/CONF.189/PC.1/12).

21. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1998/26 invited the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to present to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session and to the Preparatory Committee its contribution to the objectives of the World Conference, including undertaking a series of studies. The attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to eight studies which have been prepared by members of the Committee pursuant to this request: "The causes of, and remedies for, racial discrimination", by Michael Banton (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.6) (English only); "United Nations strategies to combat racism and racial discrimination: past experiences and present perspectives", by Theodor van Boven (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.7) (English only); "Zimbabwe and South Africa: the lessons we can learn", by Shanti Sadiq Ali (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.8) (English only); "Preventing Genocide", by Agha Shahi, Luis Valencia Rodríguez and Ivan Garvalov (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.9) (English only); "The definitions of racial discrimination", by Ion Diaconu (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.10) (English only); "De l'utilité de l'application complémentaire des procédures de plaintes individuelles devant les organes universels et régionaux de protection des droits de l'homme", by Régis de Gouttes (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.11) (French only); "An analysis of the gender dimensions of racial discrimination" by Gay McDougall (CERD/C/56/Misc.19) (English only); and "Reservations to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: the role of CERD", by Ion Diaconu and Yuri Rechetov (CERD/C/53/Misc.23) (English only). These eight studies will be available to the Preparatory Committee as background documents.

22. Also in resolution 54/154 the Assembly requested , inter alia, other human rights mechanisms to undertake reviews and submit recommendations concerning the World Conference and the preparations therefor to the Preparatory Committee through the Secretary-General. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting a contribution by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/CONF.189/PC.1/14) and a note by the Secretary-General transmitting a contribution by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (A/CONF.189/PC.1/15).

Contribution of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

23. In resolution 1999/78, the Commission requested the Sub-Commission to undertake a study on ways of making United Nations activities and mechanisms in the context of programmes aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance more effective. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the contribution of the Sub-Commission (A/CONF.189/PC.1/13).

24. The Preparatory Committee will also have before it a working paper submitted by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, member of the Sub-Commission, containing proposals for the work of the World Conference, in accordance with Sub-Commission resolutions 1998/6 and 1999/6 (A/CONF.189/PC.1/13/Add.1). The attention of the Preparatory Committee is also drawn to studies already prepared by members of the Sub-Commission in the context of preparations for the World Conference. These studies include a working paper by Marc Bossuyt on the concept and practice of affirmative action (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/5), a working paper by David Weissbrodt

on the rights of non-citizens (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/7) and a working paper by J. Oloka-Onyango on globalization in the context of increased incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/8). These studies will be made available to the Preparatory Committee as background documents.

Contributions by non-governmental organizations

25. In resolution 54/154 the Assembly, inter alia, requested non-governmental organizations to undertake reviews and submit recommendations concerning the World Conference and the preparations therefor to the Preparatory Committee, through the Secretary-General. The Preparatory Committee will have before it a note by the secretariat indicating written statements received from non-governmental organizations (A/CONF.189/PC.1/18).

Item 8. Organization of the work of the second session of the Preparatory Committee

26. The Preparatory Committee will have before it, prior to the conclusion of its first session, a note for its consideration containing a draft provisional agenda for its second session.

Item 9. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee to the General Assembly

27. At the conclusion of its session, it is expected that the Preparatory Committee will adopt a report for submission to the General Assembly.